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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on how to incorporate learner strategy instruction as part of regular teacher training courses, both preservice and inservice. Panelists Andrew Cohen, Carol Hosenfeld, Anna Chamot, Rebecca Oxford, Joan Rubin, Rhoda Curtis, and Anita Wenden addresses questions from the audience on a variety of topics related to teacher education and learner strategies. The questions include: (1) how do you educate teacher trainers to perceive their needs to include teaching strategies; (2) what teaching philosophy best fits learning strategy instruction; (3) how do you decide what it is that teachers need to know about learner strategies; (4) how do we assess or evaluate whether teachers are effectively teaching learner strategies; (5) what are the characteristics of good strategy instruction; (6) how do you get secondary content-area teachers to take the time to teach learning strategies; (7) what obstacles do teachers face in incorporating learner strategies into their language curricula; (8) what would be the best way to introduce the concept of learner strategies; (9) what teaching strategies are appropriate for learner strategy instruction; and (10) how much time should teacher training take. (Contains 26 references.) (MDM)

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ED 376 701

Components of a Teacher Education Curriculum for Learner Strategies (4105) TESOL Colloquium 1994, 28th Annual Convention and Exposition in Baltimore, Maryland

Introduction

JOAN RUBIN

As you know, learner strategies has become an important topic within language teaching. This has come about due to extensive research on the nature of learner strategies (on what a variety of kinds of expert learners do in a variety of situations) and, more recently (although not enough), some on- going research on learning strategy instruction which suggests that such instruction impacts self-efficacy, acquistion of strategies and performance.

On the basis of this research we are led to the question of how we can now begin to incorporate learning strategy instruction as part of regular teacher training courses, both pre-service and in- service. Hence, our concern to day is what are the components of a good program? Some of us know what it takes to get learners to learn. But what kind of program will help new teachers understand what learning strategy instruction consists of, buy into it, and be able to integrate it into their teaching.

One of the things that will probably come out of this session is an understanding that this is a major task. Many of us have found that it's sometimes easier to get learners to use strategies than it is to get teachers to understand how they work. How many of you are involved in teacher training in one way or another? That's terrific--we have the right audience here.

All of the panelists have been involved in teacher training for learner strategies, at the university and K-12 level, pre-and in-service training and in workshops around the world. We've been trying to help teachers learn to incorporate learner strategies as part of their regular teaching. We have done it for elementary, secondary, university, adult education--a wide array of situations. [Introduction of panelists: Andrew Cohen, Carol Hosenfeld, Anna Chamot, Rebecca Oxford, Joan Rubin, Rhoda Curtis, and Anita Wenden]

There are some handouts at the back. The one that you must have is the one that we are going to begin with. Our agenda is, first of all, that Rhoda will introduce the exercise and the rationale for the exercise . Then you will spend ten minutes working on the questions, and we, the panelists, will convene to discuss our working principles. Then, your questions will be collected and collated. Finally, we will have 75 minutes for the panelists to respond to your questions and, where possible, for you to participate with the panelists. At the very end, I will try to wrap up what has happened, to notice areas of agreement or disagreement, and new areas for research and for thought. To do the first exercise, you need to be in groups of five. The session is being recorded, so please use the microphone when you are speaking.

RHODA CURTIS

Before you start moving, I'll point something to you that when I handed out to this task sheet, I made the assumption that you would immediately form yourselves

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into groups of five. ell, you didn't do that! So, if you do that right now, then we'll move on. This is a "subversive" activity--we are going to respond to your questions. If you are at all familiar with the usual pattern of U.S. (American) structure, you know that even if it is called a "communicative" activity, even though it is called a "learner-centered" activity, usually the person in power, in authority (you and me), create the paradigms, and create the questions to which you are expected to respond. No, no, no, no, no! That is not the point. The point is for you to write individually the three questions that you have about the learner strategy instruction. Then you must choose the most important one. What we are doing is a model of what I hope you will do in your own classes. The whole point is that you are forcing your students, teachers, etc. to prioritize. Someone in the group will be the recorder. That person will record that one, most important, question. When you have gotten those five questions, then you begin to try to find the answers or the solutions to those. That means your minds are already opened up, you've already tried, you've already got on the way, and then we will collect and collate your questions, and our responses will be geared to what's on and in your minds. That's what I mean by being truly subversive. The handout (on salmon-colored paper) has drawings, graphics, an outline, and a request for response from you to me--so I can quote from you fully in my next article. Please begin. You have ten minutes.

JOAN RUBIN

The ten minutes are up, but I'm sure you could talk for several hours. Rhoda will be coming around to collect your answers. For the next five minutes, I would encourage you to continue to discuss your answers, as we collate the papers. Please come forward--we won't bite! We also won't lock the door, so you can leave if you want to .

Now, our panel will begin to answer your questions.

How do you educate teacher trainers to perceive their needs to include teaching strategies?
What teaching philosophy best fits learning strategy instruction?

CAROL HOSENFELD

In my view, we do not have <u>one</u> philosophy that best fits learning strategy instruction. I think that <u>strategy instruction</u> can be included in many different philosophies. For example, teachers who have selected the philosophy of whole language--that I view as chiefly a "top-down" approach to second language learning--could effectively include teaching components of strategies in their lessons that would strengthen students' acquisition of bottom-up skills.

Once having said that strategy instruction can be included in many different teaching philosophies, and that it is up to the individual teacher to select their overall teaching philosophy, I would like to describe one philosophy to second language learning that I think <u>strongly</u> supports students' acquisition of strategies. That philosophy or approach is called <u>A Cognitive Apprenticeship Approach to Second Language Learning</u>.

The concept of Apprenticeship is not new. It has been used as a philosophy or approach to education throughout the ages. It was used in the Greek and Roman Eras, in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and it is used today. Webster's dictionary (1971) describes an apprentice as "One who is learning by practical experience under skilled workers a trade, art or calling." Today, the goal of some teachers, theoreticians and researchers is to bring into the classroom many of the features of traditional apprenticeship. However, formerly the actions of the Master or Expert and his apprentices were visible, whereas today by adding the concept of cognition, the Master of Expert must intentionally display covert thought processes.

Cognitive Apprenticeship has been proposed in the educational literature by several writers including: (1) Allan Collins, John Brown, and Susan Newman in their chapter entitled Knowing, Learning, and Instruction and (2) Lauren Resnick and Leopold Klopher in their chapter entitled "Toward the Thinking Curriculum: An Overview." There are several writers who to my knowledge do not use the term "Cognitive Apprenticeship" to describe their philosophy or approaches; but nevertheless, whose work embodies its premises; these writers are Scardamalia and Bereiter (1984), Palincsar and Brown (1984) and Schoenfeld (1983) in the teaching of mathematics. The literature I have just mentioned in on the handout I distributed at the beginning of the session.

The philosophy or approach consists of several premises including the following:

1. By creating social interactive settings with specific goals we can create a culture of expert practice for novices to participate in and to work toward;

2. We can set benchmarks and incentives for progress;

3. There exists for each student "a zone of proximal development," "a region of sensitivity to instruction," "a readiness" that with social, caring, and knowledgeable support will allow a student to move to a higher level of performance. This notion proposed by Vygotsky (1991) states that working alone a student can perform at one level; and working in a social setting that students can perform at a higher level.

4. Performing cognitive activities in a social setting tells students these acts are socially valued;

5. By making visible covert strategies used by more proficient students in performing complex tasks, novices can select and experiment with different and hopefully more effective approaches to the tasks they now perform.

6. By taking responsibility for one's own and for each other's learning, students can create a climate in which they learn the benefits of both cooperation and competition.

7. Completing the processes of students's acquisition of as many of the moves as possible used by the experts in performing classroom tasks will give them greater mastery over their own learning.

Some of the methods (or moves) of cognitive apprenticeship are: modeling, diagnosing, extended listening, replaying, fading, and scaffolding (which includes offering hints, giving feedback, reminding, questioning, encouraging, praising, etc.)

What do we need to implement this philosophy? What we need is research on

processes bilinguals at different levels of expertise use in performing tasks; e.g. reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Examples of research that contribute to this knowledge base would be: (1) Ellen Bloch's work on strategies of readers who demonstrate different approaches to interpreting text; and (2) Our own work at UB where we are investigating revision strategies of ESL writers who are at different levels of expertise (Hosenfeld and Segal). I suppose at this point some of you are asking "What is an expert?" In answer to that question, all we have at this stage is two negatives both in the process of being developed. One expert or proficient writer whose performance on a revision task we are analyzing seems to readily take on the subjectivity of the Director of an Institute, to then take on the subjectivity of an American freshman to whom he is addressing his handout and to write within what we are calling a box-within-a-box. The novice on the other hand essentially always retains her own subjectivity. Even when she shifts locus, she remains herself in that locus as one of the group of international students to whom she is writing. In other words she has the wrong audience and she is part of that audience.

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ANNA CHAMOT

I haven't spoken to Carol about this before, but the general framework that she proposes is exactly the one that I espouse. What I am going to say is what this means in terms of teachers' beliefs and I would like to lay out some beliefs that I think that teachers who are going to be successful strategy instructors need to have. They're not in any particular kind of order.

1. I think teachers need to have the belief that learning is a mentally active process. People don't learn by osmosis, but they have to be mentally engaged in the learning act.

2. Teachers need to believe that the teaching-learning process is interactive. It's not a transmission model with the teacher as knower and the student as receiver of knowledge from the teacher. That does not work for strategies instruction.

3. Teachers must truly believe that all students have very valuable prior knowledge and that this prior knowledge can be accessed somehow and that it can be used to construct new knowledge. What hurts me most when I work with teachers on strategies instruction is to hear a teacher say "But my students don't have any prior knowledge." I've heard it many times. "My students don't have any prior knowledge. They have come into school without any. They're ten years old and they've never been to school before, they've never been in a classroom, and they don't know how to do these things. They have no prior knowledge." So, I think it is really important to truly believe in the value of the prior knowledge of your students.

4. A teacher needs to believe that students, in order to learn skills (any kinds of skills involved with language or other kinds of learning), need to practice those skills in an integrated fashion, not only in tiny, little component pieces. Putting the whole thing together is how you learn to drive a car, or read, or all kinds of other skills. A teacher has to truly believe that.

5. Teachers need to believe that students truly benefit from working collaboratively, whether it's in formal cooperative learning or in less formally-constructed collaborative pairs or groups. This is truly valuable in the classroom and works very well with strategies instruction.

6. Teachers need to believe that self-reflection by both students and the teacher is essential for developing understanding of one's own thought processes and learning approaches. This is what builds metacognitive knowledge and you have to believe that this is valuable and that it takes quiet self-reflection and discussion.

ANITA WENDEN

So far the focus has been on teachers' beliefs regarding the nature of the learning process. To engage teachers willingly in the process of learner strategy training (a term I prefer to strategy training) requires a discussion of their beliefs about the goals of language teaching and their roles as language teachers. With regard to the goals of language teaching, most would agree that our goal is to teach students to use their second language. That is we want to make them linguistically autonomous. A second goal implied in a commitment to learner training is the promoting of learner autonomy. Whether or not teachers believe in the importance of this second goal must also be taken into account in a teacher education program seeking to prepare teachers to do 'learner training.'

This goal builds upon the notion of learner centeredness, a key concept that has been around for a long time. In practice being learner centered has meant 1)changing the curriculum to suit our student's needs, 2) setting more cognitively challenging tasks (as Anna and Carol have just been suggesting), 3)negotiating the curriculum with students, 4)taking their affective needs into account or, 5)taking a 'sink or swim' approach: giving students a task and letting them take over. All these

strategies are valid and important, but in the end we don't empower students because we keep the power onto ourselves. We never really systematically teach them how to learn on their own. We do not do "learning skills' or 'learning-to-learn' training. To empower students, such training is necessary--whether or not such training is undertaken will depend on how teachers view their language teaching goals.

With regard to role, a belief that our goal is to help students develop learner autonomy implies a view of our role as sharing with them not only our linguistic expertise, but also our methodological expertise so they may become aware of and take control of the learning process. Whether or not teachers view themselves as educators (not merely as language teachers) contributing not only to enhancing their students' linguistic skills but also to the overall goals of a humanist and liberal education will also influence the willingness and interest they take in the process of learner training. For viewing their role from this broader perspective, they will understand that in promoting learner autonomy they are providing students with knowledge and skills that they can apply to other situations when they leave the classroom, i.e. to situations in which they may find themselves as professionals or citizens. In sum, they are preparing them to be lifelong learners.

How do we decide what it is that teachers need to know about learner strategies?
How do we assess or evaluate whether teachers are effectively teaching learner strategies?
What are the characteristics of good strategy instruction? (What would you want to include in your instruction? These elements can be used as a way to evaluate teachers.)

ANDREW COHEN

At the University of Minnesota now, it isn't just an interesting theoretical question, because we sent out an invitation to all of the hundreds of foreign language teachers at the U of MN, asking them to participate in a ten-week seminar in the spring on this topic. Then in the fall, they will train their own learners. We have [fourteen] teachers of [nine] different languages who will participating in this ten-week program (three hours each session) so I can kind of map out what we intend to do.

1. The first area you could call research and theoretical contexts, where we'll not only talk about what language is and what language learning is and what language acquisition is (and theories related to those issues), but we'll cover these philosophical issues that Carol, Anna, and Anita spoke to so articulately. We want to include that in the instruction so that they get a sense of where strategy instruction sits in terms of philosophies, teaching methodologies, and learning preferences.

2. The second thing we want to do is practical, hands-on work. This will include things like having the teachers themselves take the diagnostic surveys (e.g., the SILL as a strategy inventory, the Kolb Learning Style Inventory, [and Edmond's Learning Style Identification Exercise--ELSIE]). They'll run themselves through these batteries to get a feeling themselves of how they are as language learners. We'll ask them to reflect on ways that they may differ from other language learners. We'll have

them actively participate in learner strategy instruction activities, including learning new vocabulary through mnemonics, answering general comprehension questions after skimming a text, rehearsing short speeches, selectively attending to short listening passages, so we'll get them involved in hands-on work. And fourthly, we'll have them engage in problem-solving/evaluative discussions in small groups and pairs. In fact, it is a buddy system we'll have. Two teachers of German together, two teachers of French and so forth, because in the fall then they will in fact be teaching and we'd like this paired work to continue.

3. Thirdly, and this is the final component, we have lesson plan integration/materials development. The strategies could be incorporated into their current language curricula, as well as give the teachers practice with creating new materials. What this means is having them bring their textbooks to the seminar and actually identifying points in their own teaching materials where they would want to train for vocabulary, train for selective attention strategies, and so forth, to make these identifications early on. And to use lesson plan integration as a feedback mechanism both for the learning strategy instruction coordinator (who in this case is Susan Weaver, a TA working on this project with me) and with the teachers themselves. In this case, we're funded by a National Language Resource Center grant, so there's federal money now, which is actually exciting. So we have our TA funded to do this and we also have an RA doing an evaluation of it, which I may speak to later.

JOAN RUBIN

I've been giving a number of workshops around the world on learner strategy instruction around the world and the most recent one I did in Egypt consisted of 26 hours of instruction. Althugh I've done this workshopmany time before, it usually took. 8 hours. In Egypt it took 26 hours, and even so we didn't get all the way through, but it was a lot better. I think the most important thing that I did there was have the participants bring in their textbooks, and, in the end, what I did was to give them a strategy and asked them if they could integrate it into a particular lesson.

Initially, the participants found it difficult so I came up with a sample lesson which I created which followed the principles of learner strategy instruction. The principles include naming the strategy, giving a reason why it's important, modeling for the participants that strategy, providing examples, and then having the participants themselves begin to use the strategy. This is about a five- or six-step lesson (it took about three pages to exemplify it) and we went over it three, four, five times. It takes a long time to begin to understand what's involved and how to integrate strategies into existing lessons and books.

Another of the components of good strategy instruction is the recognition that it's not something you can give a lecture on and have people do. It's something that takes a long, long time to absorb. Probably remarkable to you would be the fact that it's probably more difficult to train a teacher to understand learner strategies and to understand how to integrate them in the classroom than to train the learner directly. This is something we've all been learning the hard way. I see some faces out there nodding as well, so I think that some characteristics of good strategy instruction are, as I say, enough time, and lots and lots of actual hands-on practice using a model which you provide.

REBECCA OXFORD

I'm glad I'm next because I wanted to say something about textbooks. We've done a small pilot international study about how textbooks, language textbooks in particular, treat learning strategies. And we're seeing that publishers are now doing it very, very openly and explicitly and they're even calling them strategies. As you will see from many publishers in the foreign language field with German, French, and Spanish, and in the ESL/EFL field, it's happening--finally. And we're pushing it along. This is happening mainly in the United States, it's happening somewhat in England. Western Europe hasn't quite gotten there, but you'll see more of that. Australia--I'm glad to hear it--I didn't know. So that means that we have less trouble--we don't always have to go through the textbooks and try to figure out the hard way where strategies can come. Sometimes the authors of the books are beginning to do it for us, to help us with that.

I'm just going to say some quick things about what I think strategy instruction could include. [See handout.] These are things that we need to help teachers know. This is on handouts in the back and a few up here--of you don't have one, feel free. In a nutshell, this is something that we have all been saying. This is not original with me--this is original with all of us for the last X number of years.

1. First of all, in the opinion of researchers (based on empirical research and also theory), strategy instruction should be woven into the regular classroom activities. It should not be a whole separate thing. Typically it works best, it's more effective, if it is woven right in. And the reason is (it reflects exactly what Joan said), you want to have lots and lots of hands-on practice with strategies. How can you do that really if you disembody the strategy instruction from regular classroom activity. The classroom activity gives the real impetus for learning how to use strategies and especially if the activities are communicative and meaningful to the students, then the strategies become very important. I just laid out a few strategy categories. These could be called anything.

Forming concepts could be called cognitive strategies, right? Remembering new material could either be called cognitive strategies or memory strategies, depending on how you want to slice it. Overcoming limitations could be part of cognitive, or could be called a separate strategy grouping. I'm just giving common, normal communicative names instead of more formal names. Managing your learning (planning, evaluating, monitoring)--of course that would be metacognition. Understanding and using your emotions--those are your affective strategies. Working with others (through asking questions or cooperating, etc.)--social strategies. So what I think is that students often benefit from normal English language instead of more formalistic names for strategies. However, they also catch onto the more formal names, too. If you want to teach them the word "metacognition," fine, they'll get it, but I usually use more laid-back names.

2. Asking students what strategies they already use through any number of strategy assessment means: diaries, surveys, think alouds, group interviews--a lot of other methodologies, techniques for strategy assessment. I don't think that we can do strategy instruction without knowing where the students are coming from in the first place--what strategies they already use.

3. Build upon what students already do and expand their strategy repertoire. Again, you can't do that without knowing what they currently do.

4. Teach students to choose strategies that fit their learning styles and personality types. Andrew said that they're giving the Kolb. That is a learning style instrument--learning styles are broad and general approaches to learning. And I would suspect that one of the reasons that they're giving that is to help students know what their basic instincts are toward learning and they should pick strategies that go naturally with that. Or they can pick strategies that would stretch their style, but they can do that in an aware and conscious way.

5. Then help students select strategies that go together and that fit the task.

6. Here's one that is directly from what was said before by Joan and others--teach students how to practice and transfer a given strategy. Practice, practice, practice--makes perfect. That's the truth.

7. Help students evaluate the success of a given strategy. Again, this is very explicit strategy instruction. There is no "blind" strategy instruction here. We do not make the students guess. This is not totally discovery learning--you know, the students have to figure out what they're doing. We want the students to have some concept--some of your better students will automatically understand exactly what's going on, but other people need to have it named for them. Everybody needs to know eventually what they're doing.

8. Finally, strategy instruction is not something we do by ourselves. The students do it with each other--they help each other if you let them--and we get it from textbooks and we get it from learner guidebooks, such as the Rubin & Thompson second edition, which is very helpful. We also have one from England. There are new learner guidebooks coming out now that are very valuable for strategy instruction, so we are not alone.

ANITA WENDEN

Good strategy training should be done in the context of the language learning task. The literature on task-based teaching and learning distinguishes between a target task and a pedagogical task. The target task refers to what learners need to learn--i.e. their linguistic needs. For example, a target task can refer to the main objectives of a whole course or of a particular lesson. The pedagogical task refers to activities that are organized to enable students to achieve the course or lesson objectives (i.e. the target task). It is the former meaning of task that I intend when saying that strategy training should be done in the context of the language learning task. First, this means that as you plan to teach particular language skills, the related learning strategies and beliefs necessary to learn these language skills are also taken into account. They are made an integral part of the course work or the lesson plan and activities devised to teach them.

Doing strategy training in the context of the language learning task will also require that learners be helped to develop and refine the relevant 'task knowledge." The concept of task knowledge may be best understood as the knowledge outcome of an appraisal process learners conduct when they approach a task. Very simply this involves asking and answering the following questions: 1)What kind of task is this? 2) How will it serve my instrumental needs? and 3) How do I go about doing it? The

answers to these three questions refer to the three dimensions of task knowledge: task classification, task purpose, and task demands.

In fact, as teachers we are quite familiar with this appraisal process for we typically conduct it as we prepare a course or class. Implied in our methodological decisions is an understanding that language learning is a different 'kind' of task from subject matter learning. We know that pedagogical approaches vary depending upon the kind of language skill we are teaching. We are also concerned that our language learning objectives respond to the needs of our students--we want them to see the relevance of what they're doing. And finally, we spend a lot of time determining how we're going to go about teaching a particular lesson--we try to determine the task demands, i.e. 1) what knowledge and skills students will need to do a particular task, 2) how the task is to be divided up, 3) in what order it should be done, and 4)within that context, we can select the learning strategies that need to be taught.

Therefore, it is these three simple questions and the language learning task that sets the parameters for answering them that provide the context for helping learners learn to use cognitive strategies autonomously.

How do you get secondary content-area teachers to take the time to teach learning strategies?
What obstacles do teachers face in incorporating learner strategies into their language curricula?

JOAN RUBIN

Part of the problem is convincing the teachers, but another part of the problem arises from other kinds of obstacles that there are. Learner strategy instruction is a relatively new idea. Where do the obstacles come from?

ANNA CHAMOT

I think I've heard, since I've been working with secondary teachers, both ESL and foreign language, since 1988 on this issue--I have heard every possible obstacle, and there are many. Let me just run down the list that I came up with. First of all, the question of what strategies do I choose to teach? What's the best strategy for this particular task? And how to integrate those strategies seamlessly into the lesson, because what we've noticed in our research is very often teachers will say, "OK, it's Friday afternoon and we're going to do strategies work now, because that's fun." But then it's like there's no relationship between that and the actual curriculum. And the other thing that's happened is: OK, we have this strategy lesson which we (the researchers) thought was integrated into the curriculum, but then the teacher makes the mistake of saying something like, "Now it's time to do what those people at Georgetown University--you know, that research study--now we're going to do something for them." And so it gives the wrong message. It needs to be seamless. I mean, it needs to be such an integral part of the teaching that it's just part of what students expect. At the high school level, this involves also really practical things like

it counts towards your grade. Teachers have difficulty in being really explicit about strategies instruction. Sometimes they say, "But I teach all of that!" and you observe them or have a video, and they're being so indirect that the students really aren't getting it. So, the level of explicitness--for some teachers it's really hard to come right out and say, "This is the strategy, this is what it's called, this is how it works, and this is why you should use it, and this is when you should use it, and this is how I use it."

Which brings me to the next thing that's difficult which is modeling the strategy for students. One of the most effective ways of showing students how to use a strategy is by modeling it yourself, often through thinking aloud as you work through a similar task yourself, Giving students a picture of your mental processes as you're trying to get meaning from a text or write something or understand something you're listening to. This comes naturally to some teachers--I think it should come naturally to all teachers, since we all know that all of us are teachers because we didn't make it acting. So, it should be really easy--but it isn't. I mean some teachers really take to it and other teachers find that it's sort of embarrassing to reveal your inner thoughts to your students. So that's an obstacle.

Teachers very often feel that the time spent on strategies instruction is time taken away from what they're trying to teach. This is a really difficult obstacle to overcome. You have to have teachers try it on faith the first time. We have had really good responses from teachers at the end of the school year when we do structured interviews with them and they say, "You know I thought that this was going to be taking so much time away from what I was teaching. When I started the strategies instruction, I was not covering everything in the curriculum--I was further behind than I was last year. But then, when the strategies took off, the students began to move faster and I actually achieved more by the end of the year because the strategies helped them move faster." And in talking to some of the teachers that worked with us last year with Spanish 3 students, for example, and one of their classes in Spanish 3 of these two teachers had the instruction (and they were each teaching two Spanish 3 classes) and the other classes didn't. And this year they're all mixed up together in Spanish 4 and they say the difference between the ones that had the strategies instruction and the ones who didn't is absolutely phenomenal. I mean, they really know how to do Spanish level 4-type work very successfully. So, you know, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If teachers can do it and find that it's successful, then they'll realize the time is well-spent.

The language of strategies instruction is a really big obstacle and I don't know of anyone who's really solved it--successfully. We're trying. If you're teaching a foreign language you don't want to spend time in English while you describe the strategies. If you're teaching ESL, you probably don't know all of the languages of the students in your classroom, so you couldn't use the native language even if you wanted to. Anita has given us a glimpse of light on that by saying that what you have to do first is teach the language that you're going to need to talk about the strategies. And so the very first verb that you teach is "to think." But this is really an issue because you see the difference once students are at the intermediate level--it's no problem. It's just the beginning-level students. My ESL teachers that start with beginning-level students find that they do fewer strategies, they take much more time. But by this time of year, March, the kids are really able to talk about their strategies.

they're getting it, but you can't expect it to happen right away.

Another difficulty/obstacle that teachers find is "How do I know what strategies my students are already using?" And one of the things that we do in our strategy instruction workshops is to provide them with a lot of ideas and a lot of practice in different things that you can do, whether it's interviews, questionnaires, think alouds, brainstorming--there are lots of different ways of identifying students' strategies.

And then the other thing--again, a question that I think hasn't really been answered yet--is scaffolding the instruction of strategies appropriately so that whereas you start being very explicit, you want to diminish the explicitness so that students eventually are taking ownership of the strategies and are able to use them independently. As long as you keep having to remind them to use the strategies, they won't be independent strategy users. At the same time, they need to be made aware in the beginning of conscious mental processes, which is the purpose of the explicitness. When do you back off of the explicitness and how? What we've found in our current research is that in getting information from students through questionnaires. One questionnaire from one student would say, "I don't know why we're spending so much time on strategies because, you know, everybody already does this anyway. I mean, it just makes sense, so why are we spending class time doing this?" The very next questionnaire would say, "This is the neatest thing. I wish another teacher had told me about it. This is really great." So, you have a wide spectrum in the class of students' need for explicit strategies instruction. So, how do you scale back on the explicitness at the right time for each student? And I don't know the answer. We're trying it this year in the work that we're doing.

JOAN RUBIN

One answer, by the way, to your "How to do it?" might be eventually the work that Carol is doing with cognitive apprenticeship. I don't know if anybody knows the answer to that, but maybe the good learners, or the expert learners, and the novice can somehow be paired so that there's some apprenticeship going on.

RHODA CURTIS

Secondary school teachers, in particular, are up against a very difficult charge. First of all, the pressure is on from the principles, from the school district, from the parents, and from the students themselves. All I can do is suggest that you take another look at the "subversive" task, which I laid out for you, because what it does is it empower students--for perhaps the first time in their lives--to understand, by doing, that somebody is listening to their questions. Now, the questions can relate to anything in the subject matter. It will work in mathematics, it will work in social studies. And do we teach history? And do we teach English? And do we teach geography? The point is, you as teachers and as teacher-trainers, set up tasks and jobs to do. They have to do a certain amount of homework and so on. A lot of it doesn't make sense. So you're setting up a condition where your students--you're acknowledging that a lot of it doesn't make sense, but you're also saying to them, "Hey--forming the question will lead you to the answer." That's part of all scientific thinking. You don't have to label it as a learning strategy, although I must say that the two books which came out of research in Australia, are extremely effective at all

levels. The Ken Willing books. I mean, they're marvelous and they work at all levels because they are tagged for beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Teaching How to Learn: Learner Strategies in ESL and Dominie Press has it. The important thing there, and I've used this book in strategy instruction non-teachers to go to Hungary (they were experts in various fields: bankers, sales reps, doctors, lawyers, accountants, and so on) to teach in technical institutes. And during the instruction I insisted (they had to learn Hungarian, too) that they keep track of what they did. So, in all the use of learner strategies, it should permeate everything you do. The hardest thing in the world is to get teachers to change their behavior. You have to change your point of view. You have to trust your students. And, of course, by trusting your students, you enlarge your own ability to trust yourself.

ANITA WENDEN

Talking about time, I integrate strategy training with the teaching of writing and I figure if I can help them learn to use well one or two strategies in a semester, that's a lot. Then, from the methodological point of view, it takes time to develop and refine procedures for strategy training. In the case of my writing class, it took me several semesters to develop procedures that I felt 'worked.'

JOAN RUBIN

I just wanted to say that part of it--this time issue--is very important also with officials. In the program in Egypt that I just gave workshops at was a result of multiple exposures to the learner strategy concepts (based on lectures in Egypt by Rebecca and Anita). Eventually a top-level administrator at the Ministry of Education asked for extensive learner strategy instruction for the inspectorate. So, the word "learner strategy" was introduced and the people there realized that strategies were important and current.. So, the first time you talk about learner strategies, people are going to say, "We haven't got time." "It doesn't fit the curriculum." You know, "Who says it's any good." etc. It's the kind of a thing that I think you can't expect to happen all at once. It is a different perspective, and it is a valuable perspective, and one that has proven successful. One of the questions (and we're not going to get into it here) has to do with, "Do we have evidence that learner strategy instruction impacts performance?" And there is good research on that. We'd certainly be happy to make that research available to you. That would be one of the ways in which you could affect you supervisors, your curriculum specialists , your Ministry of Education, etc. But people need to hear it over and over again. And eventually they begin to say, "Well, that might be interesting."

RHODA CURTIS

When I was doing teacher-training workshops at Moscow State University last fall, there was woman who said, "I don't have to be here. I know every thing there is to know. I've been teaching for twenty years. My students are doing fine." I said, "Don't you have one question? Anything? Are your students really performing to the limit of their ability? Is there any area in which you want them to be able to do better?" Well, she wasn't sure, so she sat there with her arms folded, looked around. Everybody else was busily working. I'm standing over talking to Peter (who did the

drawings, by the way), and suddenly she looks over and she says (and I had taken enough Russian so I could understand what she was saying), "Hey--she's over there--and we're working!" And it was like the "light bulb" went on. She immediately got to work and later on in the teacher meeting (in the lounge, in that little classroom) and she went off to teach a class and came back and she said, "Guess what!! I'm here and they're there and they're working!" So, sometimes it works very rapidly.

ANDREW COHEN

I just had a couple more things to add. There is one more aspect of time we really didn't talk about, which is the time to devise the material for strategy instruction in the first place. I had alluded to that. That could be an obstacle: "We don't have time to do that." So, it's true. Few teachers have the time to re-write their entire curricula to include learner strategies. However, this problem can be addressed if lesson plan integration is part of the training program itself, which is what I alluded to before. Make sure it's an important component right in the training program, so that by the time the teachers is in the classroom, that bridge has already been crossed. And the training sessions can provide teachers with materials for the introduction of strategy instruction, as Rebecca has pointed out, she makes these explicitly available, and Anita and others have mentioned this as well.

The second point has to do with the obstacle of whether or not the strategies, after they have been introduced, are going to be reinforced. It's one thing to introduce it--the question is, will the student then forget it? This can be another obstacle. The way it can be met is by having the teachers periodically focus on specific strategies which have already been presented in an overt manner. The teachers can point out how specific strategies may assist the learner in accomplishing another language task (e.g., "Last week we practiced 'selective attention' when we did some listening activities. In what ways would this be useful for reading this passage?") or specifically structure activities to reinforce strategy use (e.g., "Certain words have been deleted from this passage. Using your knowledge of contextual cues, try to answer the comprehension questions pretending that the deleted words are new vocabulary items.") In this way, once the strategies have been introduced, they can be reinforced through overt opportunities for practice.

And the third one is this issue of whether you're getting support from your peers or your department, which is crucial, because to operate in a vacuum is very difficult. Ideally, each teacher within a particular language department will have undergone strategy instruction and will receive departmental support. I know at the University of Minnesota, I've essentially lectured or presented this information to most of the TA's in Spanish, most of the TA's in French at one shot, and to TA's from Scandinavian. Probably I've addressed maybe 150 or 200 teachers of those at the University and I think this kind of thing is important, that they have that general knowledge, and they can support their peers who are actually engaged in the training program. And it's also important--remember I mentioned before the idea of the buddy system--I think it's also important that teachers not function in isolation when they are engaged in the training, but have somebody else to talk to. If we can't find two teachers from exactly the same language, we pair them with somebody else, just so they will have somebody they're sharing with, back and forth. How they're going to do that, I don't know, but

the kinds of things that they can be doing. They can be doing journal entries, they can be doing small group, and we're actually going to be doing micro-teaching, where they have to try out the strategies, see themselves on video, the group can critique how they do (actually it could be their buddy first, and then a group) so they have an opportunity this spring before they actually go into the classroom and try them out with their students in the fall.

REBECCA OXFORD:

One of the main things that keeps popping up is the issue of time as an obstacle. I just want to turn it around: time as a blessing, perhaps. I think that if students can learn to put strategies together as a little strategy "package" then time is saved greatly. And I know Anita said that maybe you can do only one or two per semester, but if they come as a package, then you can do many more than that perhaps. And let me give you an illustration: teaching some pre-listening strategies, like planning, selective attention (what are you going to look for?), or brainstorming (to focus the people's consciousness), and then getting into analyzing what you hear during the task, and then self-evaluating at the end (how well did you do?). These come as a cluster, a natural, normal cluster. And that's three to five strategies right there, depending on how you do it. So I think that time can be dealt with in a different way. Teachers are convinced only after a certain period of time, as Anna said, that learning strategies can speed up the process. We have to keep telling them that, that strategies don't slow down the process, strategies speed up the process, ultimately. And that's a very important message that we can give.

What would be the best way to introduce the concept of learner strategies? What teaching strategies are appropriate for learner strategy instruction?

CAROL HOSENFELD

My answer to this will repeat several themes already talked about by my colleagues. For example, both Anna and Rebecca have stated how important it is that strategy instruction be woven into the entire fabric of the curriculum. That's one of the themes that will be repeated in my answer to this question. Another theme I will talk about is one brought up by Anita, when she says that in teaching strategies, learners need to know what the strategy is, why they are being asked to learn it; and when it is appropriate to use it. In my answer to this question I'll try to persuade her that there are times when it is more appropriate to delay asking and answering these questions.

And so to the question "What <u>teaching strategies</u> are appropriate for learner strategy instruction?" In my view, the appropriate strategies depend on many variables. These variables include the level of the students (whether they beginning, intermediate, or advanced), the type of task you are trying to teach, the goals and needs of the specific students, and the context in which you are teaching.

Because there are so many variables you need to consider in selecting appropriate strategies, I'm going to answer this question by considering a specific type of task. A task that is well-grounded in research in first language, one that is too difficult for many second language learners to perform, but a task that, in my view,

seems to offer students many benefits; i.e., a task that is too promising to ignore.

Although there are several tasks I could have chosen to answer this question, such as procedural facilitation from Scardamalia & Bereiter (1984; 1987), the task I chose is an adapted version of reciprocal teaching. You probably know the task, so I'll just briefly summarize it. It consists of a technique in which a teacher and students take turns leading a dialogue concerning paragraphs of a text that they're trying to comprehend. The dialogue centers around the following activities: reading a paragraph silently, summarizing it, asking a main idea question, clarifying unclear passages, and, if there are clues in the text, foretelling what will come next.

Now here is the first strategy that I would recommend for this task in a second language context: First, View the task as consisting of a hierarchy of strategies and their components. For example, in a beginning second language class with learners who know very little of the language and know few labels for the many concepts they have labels for in their native language, I would teach these students the three components in Level I of the hierarchy: using multiple labels (to speed up their vocabulary acquisition), superordinating (that also increases their vocabulary) and deleting (that helps them to distinguish between important information and details).

In a low intermediate class, I recommend that the teacher review and continue to teach the components in Level I of the hierarchy, but also introduce the components of Level II of the hierarchy: identifying topic sentences, paraphrasing, and inventing topic sentences.

In a high intermediate class, I think students who have acquired the components of the two lower levels of the hierarchy are ready to learn the strategies in Level III of the hierarchy that I listed earlier.

The second teaching strategy I would recommend in using an adapted version of reciprocal teaching repeats the recommendation made by Anna and Rebecca which is that teachers need to embed the components of the first two levels of the hierarchy into their ongoing curriculum. They need to become part of the whole fabric of the curriculum.I think that this is a crucial point. And so when do you teach them these components? You teach them whenever your existing curriculum indicates that it is appropriate to do so. Rather than the other way which would consist of stopping the on-going curriculum to teach only strategies for several weeks. (Of course we can all think of instances when this latter approach would be appropriate, for example, when a student is lost and needs intensive individual practice in catching up with her peers.) But generally, I think embedding components into your on-going teaching is a preferred approach.

The third teaching strategy-- which is related to the one described above--is the recommendation that teachers teach strategies throughout the entire school year. In other words, generally I recommend using a distributed rather than a massed approach to teaching learner strategies.

The fourth teaching strategy involves teaching the components inductively rather than deductively. And it is this recommendation that I am going to try to persuade Anita that if we use an inductive, rather than a deductive, approach to teaching the components of the hierarchy and delay using a deductive approach until we are actually teaching the four strategies of Level III of the hierarchy, we have a better chance of preparing students to perform the strategies of reciprocal teaching

and a better chance of embedding the components into an on-going curriculum.

I understand why Anita, many other researchers, and I myself have at times taken the opposite position on this recommendation. But, our current work on using adapted versions of reciprocal teaching for ESL and FL students at UB, indicates that it would be worth trying to subtly include the components into the curriculum, and only after students have mastered them and the teacher is teaching the strategies at the top level of the hierarchy to use the often recommended approach of engaging students in a deductive discussion of why the four strategies are useful, when to use them, and how to perform them.

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ANITA WENDEN

I don't disagree with inductive teaching. It's my preferred mode. I think when people talk about being explicit, and we've all said that in different ways about teaching, is that at some point we want to get the students to label what we've learned and we want them to discuss why it's relevant. How you do that, you know, depends on you. I personally like to do it inductively. I think Carol has suggested that over the linguistic levels that it's done inductively. I would say that what she teaches in the first two levels, I would refer to ask task knowledge, she's giving them the idea of the structure of text. And once they have an idea of the structure of text, then they can understand what strategies are, but that's another point. But I agree.

JOAN RUBIN

My colleague, Irene Thompson and I just completed a three year research project teaching listening strategies to third-year students of Russian. The strategy

instruction was integrated into class each day. Each time we presented one or two strategies. Over the course of the year of instruction that students received, we labeled the strategies (These were third-year students of Russian who had not been exposed to strategy instruction), and over the course of the year, continually asked them "OK, do you want to use this strategy, do you want to listen to the video again. If you do, why? What are you going to listen for?" So, although we didn't specifically tell them why, we had them reflect on why. We did so because we wanted to help the students develop their metacognitive skills, their ability to make decisions about the strategies they would use.

Another thing you want to do is to regularly get students to set their own goals. This is beginning to be more common among TESOL professionals who have ingeneous way to get even very beginning students to set their goals. They are able to do so even if you have to show pictures, or use single words. In the end, they can set some very clear goals and this will help them evaluate where they are going and feel some sense of accomplishment. It is also important to encourage learners to begin to reflect on why they choose a particular strategy. One of the things that we found was that leaners could make some very clear choices in listening, before listening, and decide whether they wanted to watch the video with the audio on or off. They decided if they wanted to listen again, what specifically they were going to listen for--not just listen again, but they were very specific about what they were going to focus on. It's possible to provide that kind of instruction and integrate it right away.

ANDREW COHEN

Again, remember our focus is on the teacher training side, not on the actual applications in the classroom, though the research that Joan was engaged in is fascinating. That's moving right into the classroom. Back to the teacher training, I mentioned before the use of journals. We've given this some thought and have some experience in our teacher training program in ESL at Minnesota. And one very effective means we had for teacher training was "dialogue journals" where the teachers-in-training, and in this case would be the teachers trained in the use of strategies, would record their comments and their experiences, as they're going through the training seminar, leaving space on the other side of the page (or the left side of the same page) for the teacher-trainer (in our case it's Susan Weaver) to respond. So, it is a dialogue during the actual training. And then they have this record when they actually provide instruction their own students to jog their memory as to points which came up, and so forth. We had one teacher-in-training who clearly told us, "I do not like to write things down." And in a case like that it could be tape-recorded. It doesn't have to be written. It could be a taped journal, where they could go home and tape some reactions to what transpired during the day. But there seems to be something very constructive, very practical, and very usable about some sort of recording of what your teachers have gone through, so that they can fall back on this, as well as, of course, all the handouts you have, and things like that. But to particularly have their own affective experiences, their emotional experiences, and very specific insights they've had about how to go about doing it when they come to the classroom, to give them some support, moral support.

How much time should teacher training take?

JOAN RUBIN

As I mentioned, we spent 26 hours (about the equivalent of a semester) with a group of people who had never been exposed to strategies and whose English was intermediate to high intermediate and could certainly have spent another 26 hours, easily, to make the point. In other situations, though, I've spent less time, and felt like I've gotten further. In part, it depends on where your teachers are starting from.

REBECCA OXFORD

Three years! It varies depending on the person. I have had people come up to me and say, "I read this book and I've changed my teaching entirely to include strategy instruction for my students all the way along the line." In other words, they did it themselves with no instruction. Some people will say (and it's true) for that particular person, but that's a rare person. Somebody will say that even after a week-long instruction, "This is profoundly affecting my teaching." For others, it may take three years. I think it really, really varies--on the intensity and quickness of person to pick it up--where they are in their life!

ANDREW COHEN

I said we're doing ten sessions, each one three hours. We thought this through carefully in terms of what we'd like to do with them and make sure that each is interactive, in workshop fashion, a lot of it in workshop. And we are giving two credits for participation in this course to those TA's who want university course credit. And we even have one who wants more, she'd like three or four, so she'll write a paper. So, to give it this extra appeal to teachers who need some extra coursework credit. But we don't have enough experience yet whether it's the appropriate time. But I'm hearing what you people are saying: for some it may be absolutely adequate, and for others, it may be a bit less. We are going to do a pre-service training, as well in September, just before classes start. We're not going to rely on what they got in the spring, but we want to refresh their memories, perhaps an all-day refresher course. And then, in the second year of our program, we're going to be videotaping the whole series as a package to send internationally, to whoever would like to see it in action. We may just take the key highlights of over our ten sessions. And the third year, the program will go into the high schools, so we're kind of mushrooming out, like that, but starting out small, to make sure we know what we're doing.

Announcement

ANNA CHAMOT

I'd just like to announce that as part of the National Foreign Language Resource Center (that is operated jointly by Georgetown University and the Center for Applied Linguistics) my particular little research team, arm, or whatever it is--part of our job now is to offer workshops and professional development opportunities to foreign language teachers at any level (elementary, secondary, university) who are interested in having some training in teaching language learning strategies. It's

foreign language. For those of you interested in ESL, we can't do ESL, but I can probably get some of my colleagues in the Arlington public schools to put something together. The ones we are providing through the Georgetown Center for Applied Linguistics and the FLRC we will do at cost, i.e., our expenses that we incur in traveling to you and doing it. So if you're interested, let me know.

Summary

JOAN RUBIN

You have been a wonderful audience and your questions were right on target. I'm sure that we could spend another hour and forty-five minutes. I think you can see that there's a lot of area of agreement here in terms. For those of you who asked the existential question, "Do learner strategies really exist?" and "What does the research show?" I would refer you back to the handout I prepared for you on references and also keep tuned--all of us are working on research on this and I'm sure many of you in the audience are. There's still a lot that we need to know about learner strategies and learner strategy instruction. If any of you are working on that, we'd love hear from you and certainly would like to have your input. I'd like to thank the panelists--it's a delight to be together again. As you can see, we're all very enthusiastic about it. It's because we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

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